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# OT 620 Pentateuch

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ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
Department of Inductive Bible Study

OT (IBS) 620 **Pentateuch**  
Spring, 2003

Joseph R. Dongell, Instructor  
BC 337

**I. General Description:** This course aims, through the study of John, to foster Bible study which is: methodical (following orderly procedure, rather than relying on chance), inductive (promoting direct personal study of the text prior to use of secondary sources), structural (observing logical connections between units of text as a key component of meaning), literary (recognizing the literary character of Scripture and the significance of literary context), historical (honoring the location of Biblical texts in their particular historical and cultural settings), theological (seeking to place the passage in the context of the Scripture and Christian doctrine), and reverent (pursuing Biblical study humbly, prayerfully, under the influence of the Spirit)

**II. Course Objectives:**

- A. Method: As a result of fulfilling the requirements, a student should be able to:
1. analyze, interpret, evaluate, and apply biblical passages with reasonable skill;
  2. describe with clarity the fundamental principles of effective Bible study.
  3. incorporate knowledge of Hebrew language and grammar into one's inductive study;
  4. come to a greater skill in analyzing and interpreting books as wholes;
  5. develop greater sensitivity for and practice in appropriating Scripture for life and ministry.
- B. Content: As a result of fulfilling the requirements, a student should be able to:
1. present a clear and thoughtful interpretation of each biblical passage examined by the class during the course of the semester;
  2. identify and explicate the major themes and theological concerns of the Pentateuch;
  3. place major theological claims of the Pentateuch within the larger thought of the Bible.
- C. Attitude: It is our desire that through this instructional process a student will be:
1. more deeply committed to the practice and refinement of sound Bible study as a lifelong personal and ministerial pursuit;
  2. more deeply committed to understanding, living, and proclaiming the truth taught within this Gospel and within Scripture as a whole;
  3. more deeply convinced of God's desire to address and transform the Church and redeem the World by the power of his Spirit working *through his Word*.

**III. Course Texts:**

- A. **Bibles:** Any assortment of (at least three) modern English translations (not paraphrases), with the Greek New Testament used according to the level of one's ability.
- B. **Bibliography:** David R. Bauer. Biblical Resources for Ministry. Second Edition, revised and enlarged. Nappanee, IN: Evangel Publishing House, 1995
- C. **Required Texts:**
- Durham, John I. Exodus. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco, TX: 1987.
- Sailhamer, John H. The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.

**D. Commentaries** (recommended for use as needed, but not required; see BRM above for a wider listing of resources for Biblical study.)

Childs, Brevard S. The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary. The Old Testament Library. Louisville: the Westminster Press, 1974.

Hamilton, Victor P. The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.

-----, The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18-50. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.

von Rad, Gerhard. Genesis: A Commentary. The Old Testament Library. Revised Edition. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972.

Sarna, Nahum M. Exodus: The JPS Torah Commentary. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991

-----, Genesis. The JPS Torah Commentary. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1984.

Wenham, Gordon J. Genesis 1-15. Word Biblical Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987.

-----, Genesis 16-50. Word Biblical Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.

#### **E. Other Tools and Resources**

Borgman, Paul. Genesis: The Story We Haven't Heard. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001.

Bromiley, Geoffrey W., ed. International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. Rev. ed. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979-88.

Buttrick, George A., ed. The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible. 4 vols + Supplementary Volume. Nashville: Abingdon, 1962, 1976.

Childs, Brevard S. Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979.

-----, Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985.

Eichrodt, Walther. Theology of the Old Testament. 2 vols. Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1967.

Freedman, David Noel, ed. The Anchor Bible Dictionary. 6 vols. New York: NY: Doubleday, 1992.

Hamilton, Victor P. Handbook on the Pentateuch. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992.

Harris, R. L.; Archer, G. L.; and Waltke, B. K. eds. Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. 2 vols. Chicago: Moody, 1980.

von Rad, Gerhard. Old Testament Theology. 2 vols. New York: Harper & Row, 1962.

Thorsen, Don. Theological Resources for Ministry: A Bibliography of Works in Theological Studies. Nappanee, IN: Evangel Press, 1996.

Whybray, R. Norman. Introduction to the Pentateuch. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.

#### **IV. Requirements:** Assignments must be:

A. **On Time:** Lessons must be finished by class time, on the dates given in this Syllabus.

B. **Legible:** Lessons may be typed or handwritten. If written, writing must be legible.

C. **Stapled:** Please do not turn in loose sheets, or sheets fastened "creatively".

D. **With Cover Sheet:** Fill out and use the provided Cover Sheet for each assignment.

#### **V. Grading Policies:**

## A. Assignments

### 1. Letter Grade Conversion Values.

The letter grades given to the six (6) graded assignments will be converted into numerical values below for the purpose of calculating the final grade:

**A:**100; **A-:**96; **B+:**92; **B:**88; **B-:**84; **C+:**80; **C:**76; **C-:**72; **D+:**68; **D:**64; **D-:**60;

**F:**55 (if an assignment is completed, but at a failing quality); **F:** 0 (if no work is submitted).

### 2. The Nature of Exceptional Work:

•precision, accuracy, specificity, depth, insight, clarity, freshness, thoroughness, and balance. It must be remembered that merely “good and accurate” work does not necessarily merit an “A”.

### 3. Independence: Assignments must reflect the independent, inductive work of each student.

Therefore, *no resources of any kind (whether books, notes of others, conversations, etc.) may be consulted for the inductive portion of each assignment.* Study groups (which are encouraged) must exercise special care to preserve the independence of each member. Group members may encourage each other and provide accountability for study, but may not produce group projects, nor nurse each other along with content-related guidance and suggestions. *Violation of "Independence" constitutes cheating, and may result in loss of credit for the entire course.*

## B. Attendance and Participation

Prompt attendance of all class sessions is expected. Instruction, clarification, encouragement, and group interaction are all supplied in significant amounts during class sessions. Any absence creates gaps in these aspects of class life, and significant losses in the learning experience.

## C. Final Grade Calculation:

6/7ths     The six graded assignments (equally weighted)

1/7<sup>th</sup>     Class participation

[This component of the grade is comprised of attendance, punctuality of attendance, punctuality in turning in lessons, and quality of participation in small groups. *It will be largely determined by each student's personal self-assessment*, but will be open to “adjustment” by the professor in each case.]

Penalties: A late (graded) lesson will be penalized one full letter grade before being averaged.

A lesson not turned in at all will be calculated as a zero. Each late credit/no credit lesson will reduce the class participation grade by one full letter grade. Each omitted credit/no credit lesson will reduce the class participation grade by two full letter grades.

## VI. The Calendar

Lesson A	Feb. 19	credit/no credit
Lesson B	Feb. 26	credit/no credit
Lesson C	March 5	<b>graded</b>
Lesson D	March 12	<b>graded</b>
<b>[NO LESSON]</b>	<b>March 19</b>	-----
Lesson E	March 26	<b>graded</b>
Lesson F	April 2	<b>graded</b>
<b>[NO LESSON]</b>	<b>April 9</b>	-----
Lesson G	April 16	credit/no credit
Lesson H	April 23	<b>graded</b>
<b>[NO LESSON]</b>	<b>April 30</b>	-----
Lesson I	May 7	credit/no credit
Lesson J	May 16 (Friday)	<b>graded</b>

**NOTE:**

There will be no class session and no assignment during exam week. May 16 will be our last class session.

**VII. About Doing The Lessons**

Advice Gathered from Many Students<sup>4</sup>

- \*Don't do a whole lesson in a single sitting. Ten straight hours even of Gilligan's Island can be fatal.  
***Do work in several blocks of time.***
- \*Don't do your work during the worst hours of your day. When would you want your doctor operating?  
***Do your work during your peak production hours, if possible.***
- \*Don't do your work around proven distractions. Most minds are not like multi-task computer chips.  
***Do find a place conducive to reflective study.***
- \*Don't postpone work until the day before. Don't join the April 15th 11:59 PM crowd. It's depressing!  
***Do begin your work earlier in the week, allowing your thoughts to "percolate".***
- \*Don't wander through the week, just hoping you'll find an ideal time to do the assignment. You won't!  
***Do plan ahead in order to set aside good study time.***
- \*Don't forget to read the text carefully, first. How could you know much about a person without "dating"?  
***Do invest up-front time in careful reading of the text.***
- \*Don't treat these assignments as "just assignments".  
***Do pray for illumination, and expect to learn something life-transforming!***

The Time Factor in Doing Lessons

Each of the Lessons is designed to take about **ten (10) hours to complete**. When multiplied over the ten (10) Lessons of the semester, that translates into about one hundred (100) hours of student investment for this course. These figures lie in the lower range of hours recommended in the catalogue for a three-hour course [97.5-117 hours, calculated as 7.5-9.0 hours of investment each week for a three-hour course].

No one should interpret the 10-hour target for each Lesson as a "time limit," or think that there would be a penalty for being a little short or going a bit beyond. I have no interest in penalizing anyone who has the time and desire to invest more than 10 hours on a lesson. However, no one should feel any pressure to do more than the expected. Grading is not based on a simple measure of hours invested. Do your best to complete the phases of each Lesson by the 10-hour target. If you have trouble getting to each phase of the Lessons, reflect on how you are spending you time. You may need to set the depth of your plow a little shallower at places in order to move through the lesson and arrive at a completion of it.

A nice correlation between the (almost) weekly investment of 10 hours in this course and in the life of ministry is to be found in Haddon Robinson's suggestion regarding the preparation of sermons. In his view, 8 or 9 hours may be spent in working with the full interpretation of the Biblical text to be preached, with 4 or 5 hours devoted afterwards to crafting the text of the sermon itself. The weekly investment in IBS Lessons, then, may help us develop the monthly rhythm that Robinson submits as a healthy pattern for sermon preparation.

**Lesson A.**

1. **The Creative Week (1:1-2:4a)** Construct a segment-level chart of this passage after the pattern of the segment chart of Mark 2:1-3:6. Along with 1:1-2, treat each “day” as a separate paragraph. (You might also want to split some days into two paragraphs according to your own judgment. You may also wish to orient your paper horizontally, or even tape together pages to create enough working space for your chart.) Take special care in plotting the recurring phrases and actions used to describe God's behaviors during these days. Bracket and label any paragraphs which might be grouped together into a larger subunit, and show any logical organization or rhetorical structures that might operate between paragraphs and paragraph blocks, giving shape and sense to the overall segment. On a second sheet of paper, identify and briefly explain several of the structural relationships you have discovered at work in this segment, along with a few of the more significant insights you have gained through your work. [You might want to limit your time to 5 or 6 hours.]
2. **The Creation of Human Beings (1:26-31)**. Do a Detailed Observation of this paragraph. Of course, begin by *very carefully* reading the paragraph in different versions, word by word. As you ponder and reflect, record your best thoughts in categories of Observations (insightful statements of fact about what the text says or clearly implies), Questions (specific problems, ambiguities, puzzles confronting you), and Possibilities (useful conjectures, or "maybe's", which come to mind).] *Highlight a few of your most exciting Observations and Questions.* Choose a portion of ONE verse to brush up a bit on your Hebrew, incorporating two or three facets of your exploration into the Detailed Observation format. [You may want to limit your time to 4 or 5 hours].

**NOTE:** Remaining Lessons Distributed Throughout the Semester.

Please  
**Staple**  
Here

Student Name\_\_\_\_\_

Group Name\_\_\_\_\_

Lesson #\_\_\_\_\_

Time Invested\_\_\_\_\_

Course\_\_\_\_\_

Time of Class\_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*\*\*\* Lesson handed in on time?\*\*\*\*\***

Yes\_\_\_\_\_

No\_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*\*\*If late, have these items below filled in:**

Date actually turned in:\_\_\_\_\_

Professor's signature\_\_\_\_\_

# **IBS Lesson Cover Sheet for Dr. Dongell**